



NEWS RELEASE

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VCIC Announces Recipients of 59th Annual Richmond Humanitarian Awards

*2021 Richmond Humanitarian Awards presented virtually by the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities on
October 25, 2021*

(Richmond, VA) - The Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2021 Richmond Humanitarian Awards. This 59th presentation of the awards by VCIC's Richmond Chapter will be held virtually on Monday, October 25, 2021. The awards celebration honors individuals and organizations for making significant humanitarian contributions to the Richmond community.

The 2021 Richmond Distinguished Virginian Award Recipient

Anne B. Holton is a faculty member at George Mason University, and served as that institution's Interim President from 2019-2020. As a child, Anne helped desegregate Richmond Public Schools when her father was Virginia's governor in the early 1970's. She served on the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court for the City of Richmond from 1998-2005. As Virginia's First Lady from 2006-2010, she championed Virginia's foster care system reform. From 2014-2016, Anne served as Virginia's Secretary of Education, working to increase Virginia's investment in public education, promoting innovation and the joy of teaching and learning in our schools, and ensuring that every student has a successful pathway to the future, especially those in high-poverty communities. Her life's work has focused on children and families at the margins, and the crucial role that education can play in helping young people move out of poverty. Anne currently serves on the Virginia Board of Education.

The 2021 Richmond Humanitarian Awards Recipients

Irving M. Blank is currently a partner at Blank & Marcus, LLC. Throughout his career, Irv has devoted his energy and resources to service to the legal community, the Jewish community, and the community at large. He has served as President of the Virginia State Bar and the Virginia Law Foundation, as well as on the Boards of many local, state, and national organizations including Jewish Family Services, the Jewish Community Federation of Richmond, Virginia Continuing Legal Education, Virginia Holocaust Museum, and the Virginia Israel Advisory Board. Irv has been appointed by 7 different Governors of Virginia to numerous Boards and Commissions. He has also been a frequent speaker and commentator on the Middle East and its contemporary history. Irv has been recognized by the legal profession in many areas from leadership to courtroom excellence, to education and mentoring.

Rudene Mercer Haynes is a partner at Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP and a member of the firm's Executive Committee. Outside of her legal practice, Rudene is passionate about ending health disparities and racial inequities. In 2020, Rudene co-created "Facts & Faith Fridays," a series of calls with the Black faith community to provide accurate information on COVID-19. Dr. Anthony Fauci and First Lady Dr. Jill Biden have joined the discussions, and the White House cited the initiative as a model to be replicated across the country. Rudene is Secretary of the Board of Directors for the YWCA of Richmond; member of the Board of Trustees for the Children's Museum of Richmond; a member of the VCU Massey Cancer Center Advisory Board; and a member of SisterFund, Richmond's Black women giving circle managed by the Community Foundation for a greater Richmond.

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Eric C. Lin is Principal of The VIE Group, a business development and real estate consulting firm. He is an experienced community advocate who has deep connections to the region and serves on several community boards. Eric was recently elected to be the Inaugural Chair of the newly formed Virginia Office of New Americans Advisory Board, and is charged with advising the Governor, cabinet members, and the General Assembly on strategies to improve state policies and programs to support the economic, linguistic, and civic integration of new Americans throughout the Commonwealth. Eric also currently serves as the National Vice President of Finance for OCA Asian Pacific American Advocates; Community Engagement Director for the Asian & Latino Solidarity Alliance of Central Virginia; and a board member at The Commonwealth Institute for Fiscal Analysis and YMCA of Greater Richmond.

Kenneth W. Soistman retired in May 2021 from All Saints' Catholic School. As the principal and then president of All Saints Catholic School, a parochial Jr-K through grade 8 school in the heart of Northside Richmond, he has worked to ensure that families who seek a safe, quality education for their children have the opportunity regardless of their economic standing, race, ethnicity, or religion. His crowning effort is the build-out of the carport - a dream since the school was built in 1967. The extra 6,800 square feet for classrooms and a new office represent more than just increased space to him; it ensures that every square foot of space is dedicated to giving All Saints' students every opportunity to succeed. Ken is also an active member of St. Elizabeth's Catholic Church in Highland Park, where he participates on the Parish Council and in the annual Jazz Festival.

The 2021 Richmond Distinguished Merit Award Recipient

The ***Black History Museum & Cultural Center of Virginia*** was founded in 1981 and opened to the public ten years later. Its mission is to preserve stories that inspire, celebrating the rich culture and moving histories of African American people in Virginia and their contributions to our country. In doing so, the museum endeavors to tell a more complete and inclusive story about America. After years of planning and fundraising, the museum moved to the Leigh Street Armory in 2016. The permanent collection consists of a 35-foot touch screen that highlights moments in Black history from BCE through present day. Featured exhibitions include stories of African American history during Emancipation, Reconstruction, Jim Crow, Desegregation, Massive Resistance and Civil Rights, and The Richmond 34. Exhibitions are enhanced through educational programs, community activities, and cultural events.

Fifty-nine years ago, the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities - then called the National Conference of Christians and Jews - began a tradition in Richmond, "to honor the work of our friends, neighbors, and family members who gave to others the same rights, respect and dignity that they sought for themselves." Today, VCIC works with schools, businesses, and communities to achieve success through inclusion. The 86-year-old organization delivers programs to educators and students in the region through the Connections Institute, Prejudice Awareness Summit, Diversity Dialogue Day, and the Educational Equity Initiative. VCIC also provides professional development for many local businesses and nonprofit organizations, leveraging diversity and inclusion to achieve success. In the last year, VCIC trained nearly 30,000 people across Virginia.

For more information about the organization or to make reservations for the virtual event on October 25, go to www.inclusiveVA.org.